

## Notes from the Friends Café event at Friends Matter 2007:

Over 30 member library friends attended the **2007 Friends Matter event** held at MHLS on October 24<sup>th</sup> during National Library Friends Week.

Designed as a leadership development, as well as a recognition event, Friends were encouraged to exchange ideas and learn from each other during the “*Friends Café*” portion of the evening, which began with an introduction to the evening’s topic – library votes and how Friends can help support success - by Rebekkah Smith Aldrich, MHLS Coordinator of Member Information. Rebekkah emphasized:

- The roles of the Friends in relation to the board, director and staff;
- The different types of libraries and therefore, different public vote options; and
- The legalities of the role of staff and the board in getting out the vote.

This was followed by three roundtable discussions led by a combination of Friends and MHLS staff that focused on just one question:

### *How can Friends help move more people into the “Registered Voter / High Library Use” box?*

*The “Registered Voter / High Library Use” box is the “magic quadrant” of the voter matrix identified in the 2007 Getting to Yes Grant Project at MHLS. The “magic quadrant” is the area you want to move the maximum number of people before your library’s vote.*

### Highlights from the targeted discussions included:

- Promotion of library vote and voting in general:
  - Run strategically timed voter registration drives; partner with the League of Women Voters
  - Help to merge the list of voters from the Board of Elections with the registered library patron list.
  - Help find the people (the leaders and other respected individuals) that can motivate others in the community [to support the library]
  - Use a script with talking points for Friends to promote the benefits of voting yes.
  - Help make the library’s message to voters personal – your experience, why you feel it should be supported.
  - Support events/activities at the library the day/night of the vote.
- Year-round activities:
  - Letters to the editor campaign – generally positive year round; targeted messages about the value of the library closer to time of vote.
  - Hospitality at the library: Friends welcome outside groups who use the library’s meeting space and inform them about the value of the library.
  - Encourage teen use of the library and convince them of the value of the library and the importance of voting for the library – encourage them to influence their parents to vote.
  - Form a speakers bureau to go to organizations and talk about the library
  - Friends can help the library have a presence at farmer’s markets, community day events, chamber of commerce, street fairs, etc.
  - Take and use pictures regularly
  - Friends can work to connect with:
    - Local politicians
    - PTA
    - Home school community
    - Chamber of Commerce
    - Realtors
    - Senior Citizen Centers
    - New residents
    - Spanish-speaking residents

### Other great tips that came out of Friends sharing with their peers:

- Understand what the public’s expectations are of the library.

- Understand what the library currently offers and what the board's plans are for the future.
- Establish an "identity" for Friends (i.e. logo, colors)
- Ask Mayor/town supervisor/county executive to declare Friends' week in October (to coincide with state and national Friends week).
- Partner with other groups to raise interest in the library

**Raw notes from each roundtable:**

Table 1:

- To plug the library at Friends' events
- Friends should have booths at street fairs and community events
- Friends work with other community groups like Literacy Connections
- Coordinate activities with schools
- More regular contact with local politicians
- Regular public relations
- Get pics in "Out & About" [section of the Poughkeepsie Journal that features photos of people at area social events]
- "Plant" in the local paper
- Distribute our info and library info in local YMCAs, community centers, etc.
- Ask Mayor to declare Friends' week (or county executive).
- Friends run voter registration drives
- Coordinate with League of Women voters
- Friends suggest good programs to library staff
- Go to Board of Elections and get mailing list of registered voters and get list of library patrons. Merge them.
- Direct mail or phone numbers
- Encourage groups using library's meeting room to vote for library budget. Including parents at kids program.
- Letters to the Editor; Coordinate letters
- Friends groups in community events, open houses
- Coordinate book sales with community events
- Library budget vote info – Friends should emphasize time, date, place
- Friends could have function coordinated with vote
- Friends could offer transportation to homebound on day/night of the vote
- Push absentee ballots
- Voter registration forms in library and at all Friends events
- Friends sponsor voter registration weeks. Time it so it's before a school vote, primary, November election.
- Friends connect with home schooling networks
- Friends network at school functions, sporting events
- Friends should join and attend Chamber of Commerce events
- Friends march in local parades and promote the library
- Use welcome wagons to distribute library information
- Friends work with realtors to give info on library to new residents.
- Link your library website to local government websites.

Table 2:

- Identify group of speakers to make the library via Friends Groups
- PTA meetings and discussing the Friends and Library in general

- Promoting library among your friends, neighborhood, clubs, sporting events
- Have a flyer for Friends Group and newsletter – distribute newsletter throughout community create mailing list and send out newsletter
- Help to create an attractive library setting where people want to come (inside and outside)
- Target different age levels
- Learn demographics and assess library use (are they using a neighboring library?)
- Promote to senior citizens centers – make sure library is physically accessible
- Outreach to schools
- Bookmark asking for support, put in each book at book sale
- Selling books at specific locations (soccer fields, train station)
- Have leader declare “Friends of Library” day (Mayor)
- Take and use pictures regularly
- Establish an identity for Friends (ex. Yellow t-shirts with picture of library)
- Linking up with other volunteer groups (scouts, junior league)
- Banner advertising “Friends of Library” at events
- Have “Friends” tote bags and mugs, stationery, aprons
- Library appreciation night or week – gifts to patrons, Mayor makes proclamation
- Calendar of events for library
- Voter registration drive
- Presence at community events with info about vote
- Merge list of frequent voters to library users
- Script with talking points for Friends to promote vote
- Sending out a letter to community groups from Friends
- Creating and keeping mailing list
- Ballots to homebound (absentee ballots)
- Regular press releases
- GOTV telethon
- Candidates forum at the library
- Reach out to new residents (Neighbor-to-Neighbor)

Table 3:

- Friends need to know from staff who uses the library
- Start early on the “get out the vote” campaign
- Word-of-Mouth campaign about services the library has
- Regular communication through community newspaper
- Newsletters and programs brochures
- Voter registration drives
- Make a plan now to come to next year’s vote and bring Friends with you.
- Get a “Friends of the Library” day declared
- Focal point for programming activities
- Teen programming can help parents see the value of the library
- Free museum pass and historical buildings
- Tell story hour parents you need their vote
- Before primary, October, May could be 3 good times for a register to vote campaign. Engage the League of Women voters.
- Speakers bureau to go to organizations and talk about the library
- Calendar of upcoming events
- Have a very attractive, prominent display at the library with clear objective information Pictures of trustees – now and potential. Helps answer Q. to staff
- Coordinate with other community events

- Posters at book sales of programs. Membership form at cashier
- How to engage Spanish speakers to vote. Partner with Hispanic community organizations.
- Speaker about democracy
- Alliance with League of Women voters. Bilingual resources. Hold meetings there.
- Encourage people who utilize the meeting room to vote
- Get new people to use the meeting room
- Become members for \$10, then harvest names for yes votes
- Discount at book sales or free book if come to library table at community day.

Table 4:

- Get more people to vote yes by tapping parents of the children's groups
- Have Friends hand out info at voter registration and open house at the schools
- Share names of frequent users to establish a base for support for the library
- Organizations using meeting room
- Mentioning voters at friends meeting
- Find out who and what the demographic are to pass info out
- Find out what the expectations of the library is by the public.
- Specific person to do publicity to keep group active
- Partner with other groups to raise interest in the library
- Find the people (the leader) to motivate the community
- Make it personal (needs to be an investment in the present and future)
- Network
- Sponsor programs that interest a wide array of groups
- 'No bake' bake sale

Table 5:

- Learn basic info – w/ dir share names, address of library users to find who are the highest users
- List of registered voters
- Get list of voters in last elections
- Merge to come up with one list
- Request list of voters from Board of Elections \*request mailing addresses no physical addresses
- Membership forms at annual book sale
- Ask current Friends to join
- Run a voter / registration drive
- Send reminder postcard
- Collect name and address of attendees of events
- List of high users and cross check with Board of Elections list – Mailing to
- Annually re-register high library users
- Use MHLS resources to figure out dollar value of service per person
- Publicize what the library offers
- Signs to support vote and ask Friends to display
- Organize voter registration and use League of Women voters to assist
- Offer many activities at library during vote day
- Have voter applications at the library
- Welcome bag for new residents courtesy of the Friends
- Have Friends Membership applications at events (all)
- Use cable to post vote /event info (and Public TV)
- Ask Board of Elections to send someone on a specified date to assist with voter registration

Table 6:

- Involvement of Teens, Kids of all ages, Parents become involved; kids involving other kids

- Outreach – beyond 4 walls, book circ. to Stuyvesant
- Need to understand demographics of town / village. Who goes to KH, VAL or nowhere?
- Passes to museums – Value Added!
- Community Day – be a presence there - a “face” for the library
- Farmers Market – voter registration table
- Publicize voter registration forms
- HS “Volunteer Fair” – Library display for community work
- Outreach – Chilton’s Online
- Get library out of the building (rotary clubs, senior groups)
- Does the community know what the library offers?
- Follow up with tax help, etc.
- Medicare seminars – like tax helpers
- Door to Door – getting new voters
- Identify possible voters – know your demographics
- “Young Rhinebeck” group meets in library – use of library space for community groups and meetings
- Require program attendees to get their library card! Parents of children participating in storytimes, etc.
- Community groups – Bulletin Boards, post Library flyers
- Farmer’s Market – especially if they run 8 months
- Voter’s registration campaign
- Use all opportunities to advertise Friends, flyers, etc.
- Chamber of Commerce breakfast – ‘vote for the library’ bookmarks passed out